



*A quarterly newsletter for WDVA employees*

Call 1-800-562-2308 for Statewide assistance

[www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov)

Volume 3 Issue 8

February 2003

## Calendar of Events

February is National  
Black History Month

February 9-15 National Salute  
to Hospitalized Veterans Week

March is National Social  
Workers Month and National  
Women's History Month

March 13  
ICSEW Anniversary  
Celebration 10am - 3pm  
L&I Bldg., Tumwater



March 17 St. Patrick's Day

March 21 First Day of Spring

March 25 Congressional  
Medal of Honor Day

April is National Occupational  
Therapy Month

April 3  
Drop, Cover & Hold Drill  
between 9:45a.m., and  
10:00a.m. State-wide

April 6  
Daylight Savings Time Begins

April 15 Income Tax Day

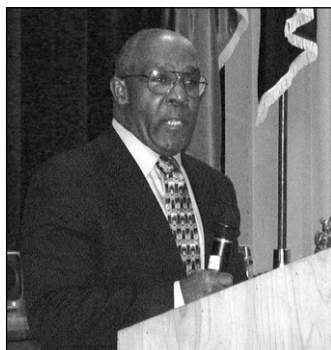
April 20-26 Administrative  
Professionals Week

April 22 Earth Day

April 27  
State Employees Day at the  
Mariners Baseball Game -  
Discount Tickets available

April 27 - May 3  
National Volunteer Week

# Celebrating Our Diversity



**Fred Hudgens**



**Denise Grant**



**Vanessa and Mary Gaston**

Employees at Orting paid tribute last month to Martin Luther King by "Celebrating Our Cultures" during a luncheon program in Chilson Hall.

Committee members Norma Urquhart, Lynn Zemke and Vanessa Gaston coordinated an event that provided a vast array of food, music, speakers and games. All who attended throughout the lunch period were presented with thoughts to help reflect on the past and the chance to learn and experience something new.

Speakers included Denise Grant from the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, who presented the History of

Minorities in the Military; Mary Gaston from DSHS and Dr. Andy Griffin from OSPI spoke about how the Civil Rights movement impacted their lives and family.

The highlight for some seemed to be singer Fred Hudgens, a truly amazing gentleman who touched the hearts

of those who came to listen. For others, it was definitely the great food and company.

The emcees were Vanessa Gaston and Chris Touris, with superintendent Jerry Towne providing the welcome and closing remarks.



**Washington Soldiers Home staff participating in the Culture Celebration event.**

## What Can I Do...

It's hard to escape the talk of the huge budget deficit facing Washington State - it seems that every time we turn around there is another story about where the cuts will come from and who will be affected.

Even with all the hard work and significant progress made by everyone in the agency, it is likely WDVA will be expected to take budget cuts to balance the state's budget.

On December 18, 2002, Governor Locke unveiled three budgets to address the state's financial crisis. They were:

- 2003-2005 Operating Budget
- 2003-2005 Capital Budget
- 2001-2003 Supplemental Operating Budget

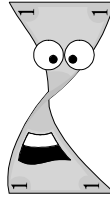
The Governor's proposed 03-05 Operating Budget would reduce WDVA's budget by \$2.6 million and 27.8 staff members. Much of the reduction would affect the agency's Field Services Division; however, the staff reductions would affect the entire agency. It is important to remember that the budget will go through many revisions before it is finalized and the numbers listed above will likely be different from those in the final budget.

The next step in the budget process is for the House and Senate to introduce their own versions of these three budgets. The goal is for the House, Senate and Governor to reach agreement on a budget by April 27, 2003 - the last day of the 2003 Legislative Session. If an agreement is not reached, the Governor will have to call a Special Session. In order for state government to continue operating, a budget must be passed before July 1, 2003.

### What can I do?

The constant talk of budget crisis can leave people feeling helpless to do anything about it. Especially when the talk is in amounts like \$2 billion dollars! But, there are things each of us can do to help offset the shortfall within our own agency - and some of those things really do have the potential of lessening the effect of future actions like reduction in force.

Voluntary Leave Without Pay is one way WDVA employees are making a dent in the budget shortfall. Voluntary leave without pay is authorized



## About the Budget Deficit?

in state law as a way for state employees to help offset the potential for RIF in their agencies. Members of the agency management team have each committed to take at least two days without pay before June 30. Throughout the agency, others have asked whether they could modify their hours, or take a day or two to contribute to the savings. There is significant potential for savings, and during these hard times every little bit helps! For example, if one half of the agencies workforce took two days of voluntary leave without pay, the savings would equal about \$75,000.

Here are some of the creative ideas employees are using to contribute to the savings.

- Voluntary reduction in workdays for a period of time. For some, a change in scheduling can offer a personal benefit while also benefiting the agency.
- Some employees are scheduling a day or half day off during a pay period.
- Focusing on time management strategies within work groups, such as not overlapping schedules, can also lead to a temporary reduction in hours.

Requests for changes in hours or voluntary leave without pay will go through the normal approval process. Only those whose positions or shifts would not need to be filled during their absence may participate. Leave slips should indicate the type of leave as "leave without pay" and should have "voluntary" written on them. If you have questions, please speak with your Human Resource Consultant.

It is important to remember that taking voluntary leave without pay is just that - Voluntary. Everyone's situation is a little different, and there are other ways staff members can continue working hard and working smart to make a contribution. The vigilance of staff members has significantly reduced overtime in all areas and has kept the agency from purchasing items (large & small) that may have been scheduled for purchase, but could be postponed. We can also all work in a safe and deliberate manner to prevent accidents from occurring on the job-site. Preventing unnecessary overtime, keeping purchases in check and keeping our work-sites accident free saves dollars that can be used to make up for reductions in the agency's budget.

## Director's Message

It can be difficult to take a step back and look at achievements when the television and newspapers continually highlight how bad things are in state government. So, I want to take a moment to share with you my thoughts on how this agency has performed over the last few years.

- The work of all agency staff has resulted in increased bed-fill levels at the State Veterans Homes – six years ago they were 86% full and today the western Washington average about 98% full.

- You opened the state's third Veterans Home! And while the Spokane home is not yet full, you've raised the bar on the level of care and quality of service the state can provide to veterans.

- The State Veterans Homes have also passed surveys with exceptionally high marks – including some surveys with zero citations – thanks to the combined efforts of ALL staff at the homes.

- Field Service representatives have helped veterans receive over \$730 million each year in compensation and pension from the federal VA. Through their efforts, Washington State is now 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for the percentage of veterans receiving compensation and pension.

Each of these points underscores the enormous capacity this agency has for change. And while it can be difficult, this change is what will keep us in the business of *"Serving Those Who Served"*. Across the state, government operations are being closely scrutinized and I'm proud to say this organization has proven it is ready, willing and capable of changing with the times. We have proven we can provide the highest quality of service at the lowest cost to the state.

Until the State Legislature passes its final operating and supplemental budgets, we will not know the final status of the WDVA budget. But rest assured, your continued efforts and willingness to adapt to new situations has positioned this agency for the present and the future.

Thank you for your hard work, your compassion for those we serve and your continued diligence around working more efficiently.



## Business and Health Care Informatics Team

“Business” is what we do in our daily operations. For example; answering calls from veterans, documenting and tracking services, and receiving funds to maintain agency operations are all Business functions of the agency.

“Informatics” is the science of collecting and managing information. The purpose of the Business and Health Care Informatics Team is to work on the way we collect and manage information related to the business and health care operations for WDVA.

As an agency, WDVA has changed dramatically over the past several years. Dependence on the state General Fund has decreased, and the agency has focused on generating more revenue to fund Veterans Homes operations. These changes have meant the agency must operate more like a business to earn revenues from Medicaid, Medicare, the federal VA and other forms of health insurance.

Late in 2002, a team of employees was chartered with the mission of **Fixing ADL**. The ADL software not only tracks resident health records, it also bills Medicare, Medicaid and various other revenue sources. Over the past several years, there have been questions and concerns about how the ADL software works and whether it does what it is supposed to do. One role of the Business and Health Care Informatics team is to work cooperatively with ADL and WDVA staff members to address not only the software problems but the implementation problems as well.

The team will also review how information is collected, entered and reported through the ADL system to ensure information from each facility is consistent and accurate. An example of an area that is already under review is census reporting. The census report directly affects the agency's revenue. Currently, each of the three Veterans Homes uses a separate method for recording census data. Through the work of the Business and Health Care Informatics Team, staff who are involved in the census process will participate in training on a system that will accurately and consistently record data from all three facilities.

Members of the Business and Health Care Informatics Team are listed on the V-NET. Ed Dolle - Team Leader is focusing full-time on the work of this team and is traveling between the facilities. If you have questions or suggestions about the team and its work, please call Ed at (360) 701-4813.

## Farewell to the Old, Welcoming the New

Residents, staff and guests became a part of history on Feb. 6, 2003, during the nostalgic finale in the Retsil auditorium.

The last public event to ever be held in the Retsil auditorium wasn't even a glimmer when WDVA employee Susan Ackers told friend and neighbor Carol Menefee about her work as an RN at Retsil. But when Menefee, an accomplished musician, discovered her planned visit to entertain the residents at Retsil was to be the last event in Building 13, she quickly pulled together a musical extravaganza to honor the occasion.



Retsil resident Earl Constant (left) joined "The Social Security Seven" during a final performance in the building 13 auditorium on Feb. 6. Earl was thrilled and surprised to have his daughters, granddaughters and great-granddaughters travel from Burien and Seattle to watch him play bass guitar during the historic event.



The "Kitsap Chordsmen" entertained residents and staff during the final auditorium program.

Entertainment by the "Kitsap Chordsmen" and "The Social Security Seven", provided those in attendance the opportunity to stroll down memory lane, enjoy the companionship of friends and family, and say farewell to the old, as they get ready to welcome the new. Retsil will be commissioning approximately 260 *Sidewalk Supervisors* to oversee construction.

### A Bit of History... about the Retsil Auditorium

Construction began in 1936 on a building to house an assembly hall or auditorium, a main dining hall, a bakery, a kitchen, refrigeration rooms, a chapel, and a post exchange. This new building was designed to be beautiful as well as functional. Unlike the earlier buildings, which had been built of wood, this new building was constructed in brick and was built to last for many years.

The dedication of this grand building was held May 7, 1939. It was quite a formal affair, attended by the Governor of the State of Washington, and featured drum and bugle corps, colorful bands, and quartets. A reception was held in the evening, followed by dancing. This was one of the most spectacular affairs ever staged at the Home. The Grand March displayed costumes representing all wars, worn by the members and guests. Minuets, Virginia Reels, and other dances of bygone eras were enjoyed by the large crowd in attendance.



## WVH Announces New DNS



**B**arbara Runyon will be joining the Washington Veterans Home as their Director of Nursing Services on or about March 3, 2003. Runyon comes from the Department of Health where she leads the Residential Care Survey process. She holds a Master of Nursing from the University of Washington and has over 32 years of progressive nursing experience including emergency room; rehabilitation; education and staff development; acute psychiatric nursing and forensic case management; infection control and occupational health in a public sector facility; and survey functions in public health.

Please join in welcoming this very accomplished leader, manager, and nurse to the Veterans Home.



**T**he Spokane Veterans Home also announces a new Director of Nursing Services, Dan DeBoise. DeBoise has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the Intercollegiate Center of Nursing in Spokane. He has

worked in the LTC care environment for four years and in the acute care environment for approximately two years. He was also part of the initial team that opened the Spokane Veterans Home, as the RN3 for the day shift staff until he assumed the acting role of DNS in November of 2002.

DeBoise is well liked and respected by staff, families and residents and will be an excellent addition to the Management Team!

## Lewis Selected as HR Consultant



**E**ffective Feb. 1, Donn Lewis is Orting's new HR consultant.

Many of you might already know Lewis, who has been with WDVA for the last 16 months, showing outstanding leadership as manager of the Custodial Department at WSH.

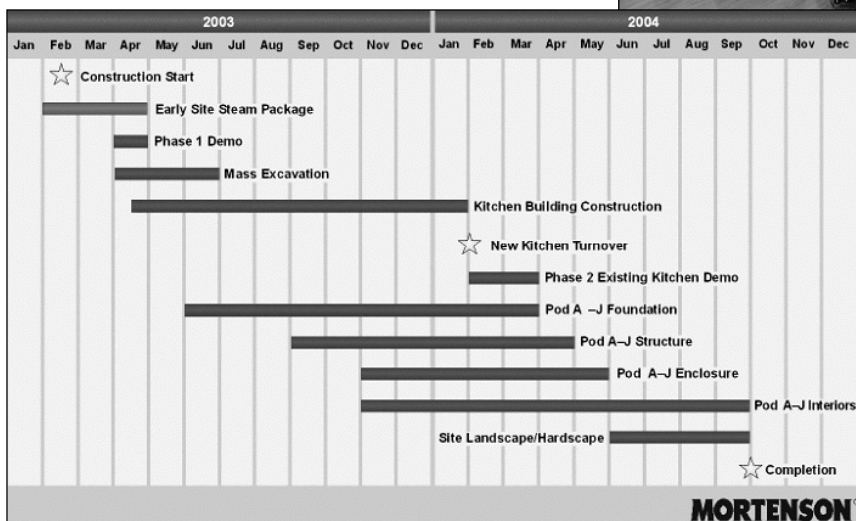
Lewis came to WDVA after 34 years of distinguished service in the U.S. Air Force, where he served as a Colonel, and was among the first deployed to Desert Shield/Storm during the Gulf War. In addition, Lewis received his MS degree in Human Resources Management from Gonzaga University.

Lewis has indicated being at WDVA is a wonderful extension of his military service and helps to fulfill his patriotic desire to serve his fellow veteran, while allowing him to continue in public service.

Congratulations!



Retsil staff and residents were recently given a briefing on the construction timeline and boundaries by Mortenson, NBBJ and Superintendent John Lee. Rerouting the steam line is the first phase scheduled to begin any day. As soon as the portables are in place for the Administration and Activities departments, the demolition of Bldgs 1-5, and Activities will also begin.





## And the Survey Says...

Results are in from the 2002 WDVA Employee Survey. The participation rate was comparable to the 2000 Survey with 327 staff completing the survey.

Thanks to ALL staff members who participated! The employee survey is an important tool that allows the agency to assess areas in need of improvement and celebrate those areas where progress is being made.

Over the next several weeks, the survey will be further analyzed and used to help managers focus on areas where specific attention is needed.

Comparison Report of Survey Results		
Category	December 2000	December 2002
OVERALL	3.87	3.82
Customer Focus	3.81	3.85
Direction	4.08	4.00
Diversity	3.83	3.82
Feedback	3.75	3.76
Information	3.36	3.48
Job Satisfaction	4.02	3.91
Learning	3.92	3.82
Participation	4.12	3.96
Recognition, Trust & Respect	3.75	3.76
Senior Management	3.53	3.30
Teamwork	4.24	4.25

## Looking Ahead...

***The 2003 statewide earthquake drill is April 3rd, 2003, between 9:45a.m., and 10:00a.m.***

After seeing what happened at some agencies during the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake, being prepared is a way to mitigate, or alleviate, some of the problems that occurred. Here are some inexpensive ways to help make your work area safe:

### **Non-structural mitigation ideas:**

- ☑ Tie-down/secure PCs, printers, fax machines, and other computer-related equipment to prevent them from toppling.
- ☑ Remove or tie-down/secure items (i.e., plants) on top of shelves and cabinets to prevent them from falling.
- ☑ Secure furniture, shelving, tall filing and storage cabinets, storage racks and shelves, wall decorations, water coolers, fire extinguishers, etc., to prevent them from falling.
- ☑ Install latches on drawers and cabinet doors, and restraints on bookshelves to prevent contents from spilling.

- ☑ Fix equipment and heavy machinery to the floor to prevent them from toppling.
- ☑ Restrain chemicals and hazardous materials, including cleaning supplies, so they can't spill or slide off a shelf and break.
- ☑ Brace movable partitions, especially if they support bookshelves or contain breakable glass.
- ☑ Provide disaster packs with emergency food, water, and medical supplies at each employee desk. Ensure contents are fresh and not expired.
- ☑ Ask someone else to look at your work area to identify potential hazard items that could fall and injure or block emergency exit routes.

Also, materials for the ***April Disaster Preparedness Campaign*** will be mailed out in late February. If you would like to receive a copy, please contact: Barbara Thurman, Public Education Program Manager at: 253-512-7047, Fax: 253-512-7206, or Email: [b.thurman@emd.wa.gov](mailto:b.thurman@emd.wa.gov).

More earthquake preparedness information is also available on the V-Net (our agency website) by clicking on the Emergency Preparedness button on the Wellness page (<http://\isdev\Wellness.htm>).

## Stress Management

### Tips on becoming more stress-hardy

Some people seem to be more resistant to stress. They are less affected by stressful situations and more resilient in adjusting to change. This quality is called stress hardiness. Studies indicate that stress-hardy people are less likely to get sick. Researchers have identified four personality factors that stand out in stress-hardy people. These people:

- **Have a strong commitment** to self, work, family, and other values. A strong sense of commitment allows people to see problems through without being too disrupted by stress.
- **Have a sense of control** over their lives. They know they cannot control every detail of their lives (for instance, their supervisor's personality), but they see where they do have control, such as their reaction to their supervisor's personality.
- **Generally see change as a challenge** rather than a threat. Change is inevitable. When change is viewed as a threat, stress levels rise. By viewing change as a challenge, stress-hardy people avoid the stress associated with threats.
- **Participate in activities** that promote creativity and their own uniqueness.
- **Have a strong network of support and close relationships.** Believing you are alone in the world makes the effects of everyday stress much worse.

Do you have these personality traits? It's never too late to develop a more stress-hardy personality. The first step is to believe that you can change the way you look at things.

- Approach one challenging area of your life at a time.
- Be committed to making things better for yourself and those around you.
- Identify the things you can control and those you cannot.
- Accept that changes will occur, and know that you will be able to deal with them.
- Develop and call upon your support network to get the help you need, whether it's someone to watch your children for a few hours so you can run errands or someone who will just listen to your plans. (Your support network will not solve problems for you but can help you solve your own problems.)

As you begin to gain control over one challenging area of your life, you will find more time and energy for tackling additional areas.

*Source: 2002 Healthwise, Incorporated*

## Just a reminder!

According to WAC 292-110-010, the proper stewardship of state resources, including funds, facilities, tools, property, and employees and their time, is a responsibility that all state officers and employees share. Employees and officials are cautioned that their own personal use of state resources should never interfere with another state official or employee, or obligate another employee to make personal use of state resources.

The Executive Ethics Board lists several "Frequently Asked Questions" offering examples of permitted uses versus prohibited uses of state resources at [www.wa.gov/ethics](http://www.wa.gov/ethics). (If you need a paper copy, call (360) 725-2169.)

In addition, the following guidelines and questions may be helpful in making your decision.

- ♦ Will my personal use of public resources result in added costs or any other disadvantage to the agency? Am I using this resource in order to avoid personal expense?
- ♦ Are my supervisors aware of my personal use of public resources? Do I feel a reluctance to discuss this subject with my supervisor or my fellow employees?
- ♦ Am I confident that my use of agency equipment will not compromise the security or integrity of information, or agency software?
- ♦ Are public resources being used for purposes that could be embarrassing to the agency by creating an appearance of impropriety?

As always, if you have a question about whether an activity is permitted or not, contact your Human Resources Consultant or the Executive Ethics Board.

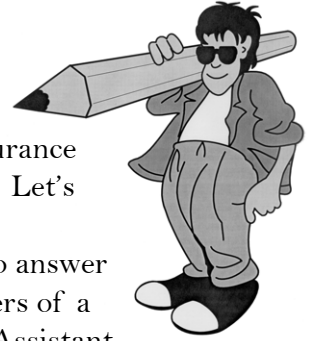
### WWII Memorial Educational Foundation \$1,000 DOLLAR SCHOLARSHIP

The Washington State World War II Memorial Educational Foundation Scholarship Committee is accepting applications for its scholarship award.

This is a competitive award for a graduating high school senior.

For an application or more information call 360/725-2169 or visit their website at [www.wwiihistoryclass.com](http://www.wwiihistoryclass.com)

# IF YOU KNOW HIPAA, YOU CAN BE A WINNER!



By now, each of you should have received an overview of HIPAA – The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. So, what do you know about HIPAA? Let's find out!

The first person from each of the three homes, and Central Office/Vet Services, to answer the following questions correctly and forward them to Brad Babayan, will be the winners of a specially selected prize. Superintendents – in the case of the homes – or our esteemed Assistant Director for those at CO/VS, will be personally making the presentation!

The deadline is March 14, 2003, so don't delay. You can e-mail the answers to Brad at [BradB@dva.wa.gov](mailto:BradB@dva.wa.gov), send campus mail: MS: 41150 or fax them to 360-725-2197. (Just cut out this section of the newsletter and fill in the blanks).

1. What is PHI?

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2. Who has to follow the HIPAA law?

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3. When can I disclose PHI?

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4. When can my facility disclose PHI?

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5. When must I protect personal or health information?

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6. Where can I go to get more information about HIPAA?

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Here's a hint to help you out: check the V-NET for a complete copy of the recent HIPAA overview presentation.